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EXCISE

TUESDAY
MARCH 16, 1954

Nicole Rousseau came to see me this morning. She wants a letter to Mrs. Shipley for possible use if she has difficulty getting her passport renewed. Rumanian by birth, she became an American citizen some years ago but since Ted's death the question has arisen whether, under the McCarran Act, she is automatically entitled to the renewal. I am very anxious to help her in any way I can.

Dear Robert Schuman came to see me and we had a long talk. He said he was in favor of debating and voting on the EDC Treaty as quickly as possible. However, the Government had put off taking the necessary preliminary steps so long that, in his opinion, it would now be impolitic to commence the debate before Easter. He thinks to begin the debate and then recess would be a great mistake. He is a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and feels the atmosphere created in the Assembly, if an attempt were made to force the report out of his Committee prematurely, would not be conducive to a successful vote. He states before the report can be brought to the floor the Government must deal further with the Foreign Affairs Committee, with whom its contact thus far on this subject has been perfunctory. The same applies to other interested Committees.

The first essential, in his view, is for the Government to reach agreement with Mollet on Socialist conditions and enable Mollet to call a Party congress. If the Government moves quickly, a Socialist congress could be convened about April 1. If the Congress obeys a satisfied Mollet, Moch would then presumably resign as rapporteur and an effort would be made to have René Mayer replace him. Mayer would thereafter prepare a new report and submit it to the Committee. This would take a minimum of four to five days under pressure.

As to the Saar, Schuman thinks if Adenauer and Eidault really wish to finish the matter they can do so [redacted] quickly but it would require good will on both sides.

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Assuming the above steps were taken, or even if the Government would proceed without having a definite Saar agreement, Schuman said, the earliest it could now bring up the question of fixing a date for the debate before the Steering Committee of the Assembly and then the Assembly itself would be next Tuesday, March 23, since this is the only day in the week the Steering Committee and the Assembly review agenda items. His own opinion is the Government should at that time, having previously reached agreement with Mollet, schedule the debate to start immediately after the Easter holidays. The most important thing in his view is that the Government should call for an uninterrupted debate by which means a vote is certain to be obtained, whether favorable or unfavorable, within a period which he estimates should not be greater than ten days after the commencement of the debate.

Mr. Schuman is, of course, always loath to criticize anybody. He contented himself by saying he really did not know whether the Government would possess sufficient determination to handle this matter properly but that if it did he felt certain the Treaty would be ratified.

His chief objection to a debate commencing before Easter is that a few days of argument by the opponents of the Treaty would be followed by a vacation lull during which propaganda would be more favorable to the opponents than to the adherents. Also, it is unprecedented in the French Assembly on such an important affair to have a debate which is sure to be interrupted. Under such circumstances, this unrealistic action would be ascribed to foreign pressure and might boomerang.

Mr. Schuman said he had expressed his ideas about the date of debate to Mr. Bidault and to other leaders of the MRP Party who were, he thought, sincerely anxious to precipitate it before Easter, and that on this point he found himself,

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although supported by certain colleagues, in disagreement with them.

He repeatedly stressed the absolute necessity of the Government insisting upon an uninterrupted debate if the debate commenced after Easter.

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The Austrian Ambassador, Mr. Vollgruber, called on me. He has returned to Paris again to head his country's mission after an absence in Vienna as Under Secretary of State. He said he had far too much work to do in Vienna and is happy to be back in Paris. He is a jolly, nice fellow.

We worked late tonight at the office on telegrams, all having to do with EDC.

Things are in a terrible mess in Italy, and the EDC is temporarily stymied, by the furore over the Montagna case, involving allegations of drug traffic, murder, sex orgies, implicating prominent figures in Government and in society, including the son of the Foreign Minister, Piccioni.

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